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**Tobacco Preemption- Flavor and Tobacco Retail License**

During a time when South Carolinians are suffering from COVID-19 and related breathing issues, Big Tobacco continues to addict our children to their deadly products.

* The nationwide youth tobacco rate is at its highest in 20 years, driven by the tobacco industry’s aggressive use of flavors to target kids. Tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, come in a wide variety of fruit, candy including mint and menthol and dessert flavors and are often paired with flashy marketing campaigns that appeal to youth.
* SC has a higher than national average of high school students that use e-cigarettes.
* In South Carolina alone, more than 103,000 children currently 18 years old and younger are projected to die prematurely from smoking.  The under regulation of tobacco products, requires we take proper actions that protect our children from a lifetime of addiction.
* 30% of all cancer deaths can be attributed to smoking.
* Tobacco-related illnesses are expensive and harmful for all of us. Each year in South Carolina, smoking is estimated to cost $1.9 billion in direct health care costs, including $476 million in Medicaid costs. Additionally, South Carolina experiences $2.35 billion in smoking-caused productivity losses annually.
* Smoker and Non-smoker households in SC must carry the burden of tobacco costing each household in our state $875.

**Ask: I am asking you to oppose H. 3681 that would prevent local communities from protecting our children against Big Tobacco.**